

**Mayor's column for
The Edmonds Beacon
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Once again the hot topic about town is the height of buildings in downtown Edmonds. I will have much more to say about this topic when the Council actually takes up deliberation of it later this winter. I will only say right now that the Council needs to hear from you in the next several weeks about your thoughts on any proposed height increases in the downtown business zone. If you are adamant about never increasing the height of buildings, let your Councilmembers know. They represent you and need to hear your thoughts. They also need to hear from you if you agree with the rationale for raising building heights.

Why is this so important? The Council is in the business of setting your public policy. How can they make an informed decision if you don't let them know? The group that is opposed to any increase in downtown business zone building heights has made their case. They come to Council every week and voice their opinion. They write letters to the editor. They even gathered approximately 1,000 signatures in opposition to any height increases. They have made their wishes known to the Council.

In an election year, you are given the opportunity to vote for your choice of elected officials. Conventional wisdom says that if you choose not to vote, then you shouldn't complain about who gets elected. The same holds true with policy issues. Make your thoughts known to the Council or give up your right to complain about their decisions. In the end, the Council will make decisions based on the input they receive. You can make a difference; it only takes a phone call, email, or letter. You don't even have to attend a Council meeting . . . but you should!

I need to stress that the issue of building heights downtown is not just an issue for folks who live in the bowl. Be clear that the discussion centers only on properties in the downtown area and not residential properties, but to some degree affects everyone who passes through downtown at one time or another. So if you are reading this in your quiet neighborhood, far away from the bowl, don't dismiss the need to offer your opinion. Everyone needs to weigh in on this topic.

The usual year-end closing sales have hit several retail businesses in downtown Edmonds. I've chatted with several of those folks who are leaving, and it's always interesting to hear the reasons that they have for closing their businesses. In some cases it's because they weren't selling enough product. Some left for career changes. Others for personal reasons. Interestingly, none of them were relocating their businesses. So many factors affect how successful a business can be, including bad locations, a change in consumers buying preferences, increases in rents, and so on.

While it's always sad to lose merchants, the good news is that some new, exciting stores are on their way to Edmonds to take their places. Chocolate lovers, get ready; a candy store with homemade product will be here soon. A good complement to the Edmonds Bookshop, a used book store, is also rumored to be coming. There will be more as Edmonds is becoming known as a great place to do business.

I wish you all a Happy New Year!